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Army Concedes the Use Of Metal Crates as Cells

SAIGON, South Vietnam Dec. 17 (AP) — The United States Army conceded today that it temporarily imprisons soldiers in large metal crates. But it said they were 8 by 10 feet in size with cross ventilation.

"We have been using them for a long time" when permanent cells are not available, said Lieut Col. Vincent J. Carafano Jr., an Army spokesman. "They are not tiger cages or little boxes like the Japanese used in World War II."

Colonel Carafano was asked about a report that a deserter had been hospitalized Wednesday night after being kept for more than 50 hours in a steel shipping container at Longbinh the army headquarters 15 miles northeast of Saigon.

"He was detained for about 48 hours because he refused to identify himself or his unit," Colonel Carafano said, "But he was not in the detention facility continuously. He was taken out to all meals. He was taken to the latrine on request, and he was permitted to walk with an escort."